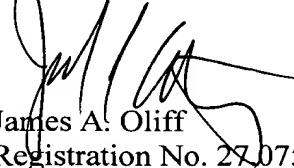


REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending. By this Preliminary Amendment, the specification is amended. Prompt and favorable consideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten paragraph (37 C.F.R. §1.121(b)(1)(iii)).

Respectfully submitted,


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JAO:JSA/zmc

Attached: APPENDIX

Date: December 17, 2001

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<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
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09/970786-121701

APPENDIX

Changes to Specification:

Page 10, lines 6-17:

As shown in FIG. 28, the distance between the slider 120 and the recording medium 140 when the slider 120 is flying is about 7 to 9 nm. If the protection ~~layer~~ film 128 is provided, the distance between the recording medium 140 and the surface of the thin-film magnetic head element 122 closer to the air bearing surface increases by about 4 to 5 nm which corresponds to the thickness of the protection ~~layer~~ film 128. In view of the foregoing, the magnetic space, that is, the distance between the medium 140 and the surface of the head element 122 closer to the air bearing surface when the slider 120 is flying, is about 15 nm. When the magnetic space is of such a degree, attainable areal density is limited to about 80 to 100 gigabits per square inch.

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